Design Resource

Mehndi Art - Yadgiri, Karnataka

Hand Decorating Art

by
Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B.
NID, Bengaluru

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/mehndi-art-yadgiri-karnataka

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Mehndi Designs
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Introduction

Mehndi is an art of decorating hands, feet, or body by applying a henna paste. The powdered dry leaves of the henna plant (Lawsonia inermis), tea, lemon, and few drops of Eucalyptus oil is used while making a henna paste. After applying Mehndi, it is left overnight to get dry, and in the morning, it stains cherry-red to brown colour after washing. An ancient form of body art is still popular among Indian women, Africa, and the Middle East. The name Mehndi is derived from the Sanskrit word 'mendhika'. The usage of this art is mentioned in the earliest Hindu Vedic ritual books. Applying mehndi is the most common tradition in rituals and ceremonies. It has initially been women's practice though occasionally used for men. As time progressed, it was more common for women to wear it. In ancient times staining with mehndi paste was a Vedic custom.

No Indian wedding is complete without the Mehedi ceremony. A special event is organized for the ritual of the mehndi ceremony for the bride-to-be and her relatives. The ceremony is mainly held at the bride's house on the eve of the marriage ceremony. The traditional Indian designs are made in the hands of the bride. The name or initials of the groom is hidden within the mehndi pattern, and the groom has to find out his name in the post-wedding ceremony. The women singing traditional songs and dancing, girls wearing colourful dresses create the celebratory festival feel. Mehndi, a highly antiseptic agent, protects the couple from viral diseases. It protects them from diseases that may occur just before the wedding, and this medicinal herb can lend a strong shield. Mehndi ceremony is not just a ritual; it reflects Indian culture. It is the combination of the knowledge of medicinal herbs with many lovely sentiments and beliefs.

This temporary form of body decoration not only adds beauty but also keeps the body cool. Earlier, a dot was applied to the palm of the hands, and it changed gradually to lines and other shapes. Today we see this elaboration became beautiful design patterns. Arabic mehndi designs, Indian mehndi designs, and Pakistani mehndi designs are the different types of mehndi designs. There are many variations and designs intricately made by artists. The patterns are created with plastic cones, syringes, toothpicks, and other tools. The art of Mehndi has existed for centuries. Henna is also used for hair dye and as a conditioner.

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The bridal mehndi design pattern on hands and feet.

Arabic mehndi design.

The bridal mehndi design pattern on hands and feet.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The following are the tools and raw materials used for mehendi art:

- **Readymade Mehndi Powder:** A base ingredient used for preparing mehndi paste.
- **Sieve:** Mehndi powder is filtered using a sieve.
- **Lemon Juice:** It is added to the powder.
- **Water:** water with lemon juice is mixed to make mehndi paste.
- **Sugar:** Sugar mixed with water used to remoisten the henna mud so that the henna will stain darker.
- **Essential Oil:** It is added along with lemon juice while making mehndi paste.
- **Spoon:** It is used for mixing the paste and also transferring the paste from the bowl to the plastic cone.
- **Plastic Wrap:** It is used to cover the container containing mehndi paste overnight.
- **Cone:** A plastic cone is used as an applicator of mehndi.

Mehndi plastic cone.

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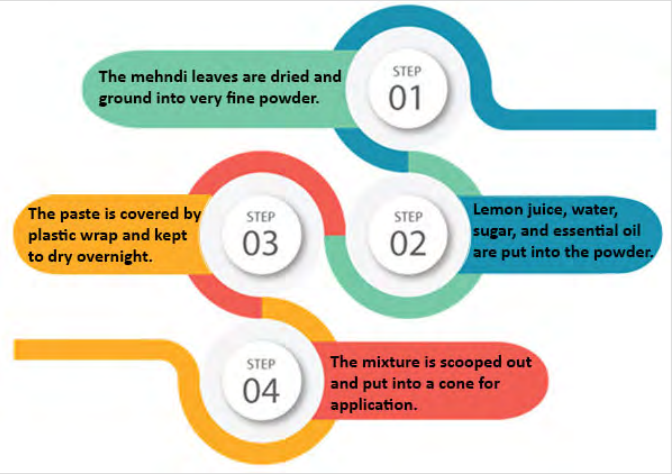
Making Process

A bunch of mehndi leaves is collected from the mehndi plant. The leaves are washed and are left to dry in the sunlight. When the leaves dried and became crisp, they grounded into a very fine powder. This powder is a sieved couple of times so that no big piece remains in the powder. If the powder is bought from the market, then one should be sure if the powder has a greenish-brown tint. Now a container is taken, and the desired amount of mehndi powder is put in it. One part of lemon juice is mixed with three parts of water. One teaspoon of sugar and some drops of essential oil is added next and stirred well until the whole sugar dissolves in water. Tea or tamarind paste can also be mixed in it. Two tablespoons of the water solution are poured into the mehndi powder. It is stirred using a plastic spoon till the water is soaked by the mehndi powder. Then, two tablespoons of water are put in, and the process is repeated. Repeat the same process to avoid lumps in the paste. The paste is stirred until it is formed, and its consistency is that of mashed potato, smooth and creamy. The container is covered with a plastic wrap and is kept overnight or for six to seven hours. Then, paste from the container is scooped out with a spoon and is fill in the plastic cone or any other applicator.

Flow Chart:


STEP 01
The mehndi leaves are dried and ground into very fine powder.
STEP 02
Lemon juice, water, sugar, and essential oil are put into the powder.
STEP 03
The paste is covered by plastic wrap and kept to dry overnight.
STEP 04
The mixture is scooped out and put into a cone for application.

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Artist is applying intricate details of the design with a plastic cone.

An artist involved in applying mehndi design.

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Mehndi Designs

Artist Ms. Heena Afreen from Yadgiri, Karnataka, learned this art from her teacher. There are few classes conducted to give training to artists. The mehndi artists charge from 50 INR to 250 INR based on the pattern made and style of the design. Bridal mehndi charges are much more than this. Here are some glimpses of beautiful mehndi designs applied by Ms. Heena and her classmates.

Mehndi artist Ms. Heena Afreen from Yadgiri.

Group photo of students who attended the training program.

Various types of designs are made according to the occasion.

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Closer view of mehndi design.

Generally, mehndi design is applied from the forearm to the fingertip.

Mehndi has applied on both sides of the hand.

A woman is showing mehndi design applied to both hands.

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Mehndi is an essential part of the whole ritual and is believed to bring fortune during special occasions like marriages and festivals.

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This documentation was done by Professor Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B. at NID, Bengaluru.

You can get in touch with him at bibhudutta[at]nid.edu

You can write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

Key Contacts:
Mahadevamma and Triveeni Mitti
Narayanpur Street,
Near Bhavani Temple, Gurumitkal,
Yadgiri Dt. Karnataka.
India
Mobile: 09980779212 / 09739350022

Helpdesk Details:
Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
R & D Campus
National Institute of Design
#12 HMT Link Road, Off Tumkur Road
Bengaluru 560 022
India

Phone: +91 80 2357 9054
Fax: +91 80 23373086
Email: dsource.in[at]gmail.com